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TWO POINTS OF VIEW

If we should now be successful in getting a freer expression of opinion back and forth across the bamboo curtain, one of the first results is bound to be the statement of violent disagreement with what has been said or done on the opposite side during these five years of virtual separation. Some new copies of Tien Feng which have just arrived show that that process of recrimination has begun, and also that the new Chinese Church is better at giving criticism than receiving it.

At the national conference held in Peking in March, YMCA Secretary Kiang Wen-han made a speech in which he objected to the description of the Chinese Church as given by Charles West at the World Council meeting in Evanston last year. Rev. H. H. Tsui, Secretary of the Church of Christ in China, also spoke objecting to an article in the Christian Century written by the Secretary of this office, Rev. Wallace Merwin.

Kiang's speech begins by voicing a desire for closer international relations, and especially with the World Council of Churches. This however will be impossible if the World Council continues to be used for political purposes. An example of this is Charles West's report at the Evanston meeting of the Council. He had been asked to speak on the Chinese church and he should have made ample preparation for such a report. "Instead of this West at the beginning of his talk said that his information was based on 'shrewd guesses' and 'reading between the lines' of church papers, together with imagination guided by 'intercessory prayer'.

"With this kind of imagination West made a report villifying the new Church of China. Naturally he could not deny that the Church does exist in the new China, but he said that our religious liberty is 'ambiguous'. He referred to our Constitution which guarantees religious freedom, but he said that this freedom has been conditioned on the churches proving themselves anti-imperialist. He declared that Christians of the new China are meeting all kinds of 'pressures'. Hence he said that Chinese Christians desire neither 'Western dominance' nor 'captivity to Communism'. Again he insults us by saying that our support of the Communist government is compromise with Communism. His treatment of independent sects is full of fictions. With no basis of fact he states that the sects have grown since liberation as a result of Christian resistance to Communism."

He goes on to deny that there is anything ambiguous in the government's policy of religious liberty, or anything unchristian in the Chinese church's stand against imperialism. As to the 'pressures', he positively states, "We have not felt any pressures." He denies that the accusation meetings were the result of pressure from the government.

This kind of report, he says, cannot help but create obstacles to the unity of Chinese Christians with those of Western nations. "We warn the gentlemen who control the World Council of Churches that the day when missionaries can represent the Chinese Church in international efforts is past. The Chinese Church cannot tolerate such unfriendly efforts."

...d about 20 times a year to keep mission boards and missionaries informed on Christian work ...hina. ANNUAL RATES: Domestic, $2.00; Overseas, Firstclass $4.00, Secondclass $3.00. Airmail $5.00 in 15 cent zone, $7.00 in 25 cent zone. Please send payments as due.

He goes on to repeat his desire for spiritual fellowship with Christians of all countries, a points to the presence of four foreign Christians at this meeting in Peking as a proof of this general hope. But if the political aim of aggression, which has been manifested in the 150 years of missionary history, and is still evident in the hostile activities of the ex-China missionaries now re-deployed in the countries ringing China, - if this political aim is not disavowed by the World Council, then the Chinese Church can have nothing to do with it. But "we believe that the great multitude of Christians in the world who follow truth and love peace will unite with us."

Tsui's address is along the same line. He quotes sections of Merwin's article in the Christian Century in which the Chinese freedom of religion is termed conditional and the accusation meetings characterized as coerced. It especially arouses his ire to find that those who opposed the Three-self Movement are called "brave Christian leaders."

"Fellow-believers, based upon our own six years' experience, have the Communist Party and the People's Government ever proposed any conditions for freedom of belief? Have they ever demanded that we accept Communism or propagate Communism. On the contrary, the Government has never proposed any conditions. Not only so, it has taken care of us in every detail and helped us in many instances; it even reduced or cancelled our property taxes in order to lessen our financial difficulties. Have we not had freedom to preach? Let us use the Church of Christ in China as an example. In the past three years, the membership of the Chekiang Synod has increased by 18%, of the Shantung Synod by 22%, and of the Kiangnan Synod by 40%. Where did these new members come from if we had no freedom of evangelism."

He goes on to deny that there was anything coerced about the accusation movement, or that Chinese Christians, under pressure to make some kind of accusation, deflected these accusations to dead or departed leaders. His own accusation, he points out, was directed against Frank Price, who was then in Shanghai. All these accusations were entirely voluntary, he claims, though he says that his own was achieved "only through struggle." He does not say struggle against what.

He grants that it is natural that the missionaries should consider the anti-revolutionary elements hidden with the church to be "brave Christian leaders." "Because these anti-revolutionary elements walk the same road they had walked, the criminal activities and perverse ideas of these elements are all to the advantage of imperialism."

Merwin's statement that "the Communists are domesticating the Chinese Church into a political tool," he denies outright, and turns the charge back upon American missions, which, he claims, have really been used as political tools.

"Lastly, we want seriously to inform the imperialists: the Chinese Church has risen to its own feet; the Chinese Church is irrevocably against Communism; the Chinese love their own fatherland deeply; the Chinese Church united with the Chinese people and all the peace-loving people of the whole world will fight for the maintenance and defense of world peace."

BISHOP HALL'S VISIT

We reported in July that Bishop R. O. Hall of Hong Kong had visited the mainland in June. We had hoped to have by this time a detailed statement of his impressions, with perhaps a number of items of concrete news from the mainland. What we have is not as specific as we had hoped, but does serve to show the general line of his impressions. On his return he was interviewed by representatives of the Hong Kong press, and stated, "The Church in China is growing and vigorous and there is no impediment to its work." He compared the present nationalistic emphasis in China to the similar emphasis in England and Germany at the time of the Reformation. Children are being cared for in China today better than at any time in the past. Manual laborers are also better off, and are under a pension system whereby they will get on retirement from 40 to 80% of their basic wage.

His conclusion that there is real religious freedom in China drew sharp challenge in Hong Kong. The Catholics, in particular, were very vocal in denying that all the impediments the fellow-Catholics had suffered in China were due solely to political reasons, and insisted that

e was very real religious persecution there. But the most remarkable criticism was an editorial entitled A Crown of Thorns in the Hong Kong Standard for June 27. The editor concedes that there may be freedom for liturgical religious practices, but goes on to say that true religious freedom goes farther than that. "It must be free to be the conscience of the State and of men. It must be free to voice its belief so that the secular community can be brought under the judgment of God. It must be free not only to praise God and adore Christ, but also to use Christian influence to correct the abuses of the social order and to protest its tyranny. It must be free to succor, help and comfort all that are in danger, necessity and tribulation. Unless the Christian Church has the freedom to do all these things, then it is free only as an 'opiate of the masses,' free only to be used as an instrument of the State."

QUAKERS VISIT CHINA

This is the title of a 73-page booklet reporting the Quaker visit to China in the fall of 1955. It can be obtained from the American Friends Service Committee, 20 South 12th Street, Philadelphia, Pa., at 75¢ a copy. (In England, at Friends Book Centre, Friends House, Euston Road, London, N.M. 1.)

I am immensely pleased with this as the definitive report of the first important re-establishment of contact between the Churches of China and former "mother churches". The Preface and introductory chapter lay a firm groundwork for understanding the point of view from which these six Quakers approached China; chapter two gives an outline of their activities in China; and then in four chapters (entitled Liberation?, "People's Democratic Dictatorship", The Christian Church, and China and the West) their analysis of what they observed is candidly and fairly stated; and finally their impressions are summed up in a concluding chapter with the obvious title Conclusions. Then there are two appendices, one a record of the interview they had with the Prime Minister (See our December 19, 1955 Bulletin), and the other the statement about the Society of Friends which they had translated into Chinese and used as an introduction wherever necessary.

I have called their analysis candid and fair, and to me it seems eminently so. Our leftist nds would deplore the hesitation and lack of enthusiasm with which some aspects of the new gime are described; our rightist friends would deplore any recognition of anything good in the new regime. But our Quaker friends call the shots as they see them, and the result is a checkered black and white, which they insist is quite different from gray. Moreover, on many points they suspend judgment, a procedure which your true propagandist would scorn. I feel certain that many of our readers will want a copy of this book for themselves.

MISSIONARY NEWS

The Roman Catholic priests John W. Clifford and Thomas L. Phillips, who were released from prison on June 16, arrived in Hong Kong early in July. Father Phillips reported that before his release he was taken on a 25-day, 3,000 mile tour of Communist China. Lutheran missionary Paul Mackensen was in the same traveling party. Mr. Mackensen has been transferred from Tsingtao to the Ward Road prison in Shanghai, and there is possibility of his early release. The priests stated that Mackensen was finally given a five year sentence in the fall of 1955, but since he was arrested in March 1952 he should complete his sentence by March 1957 if he is not released before then. Other members of the traveling party were the Catholics Bishop Ambrose Pinger of Lindsay, Neb., and Father Fulgence Gross of Omaha, Neb. Father Phillips also had word of the following missionaries: Father John A. Houle of Glendale, Cal., and Cyril Wagner, of Pittsburgh, Pa., are in poor health. Joseph P. McCormack, of Palmyra, N. Y., and Charles J. McCarthy, of San Francisco, are in good health. These four Catholic clerics and Mackensen are still in prison. Both Clifford and Phillips told of being deprived of every religious solace except silent prayer. When they asked permission to say the rosary and to cross themselves after meals, they were told by the guards that "there is no freedom of religion in prison." They were fed three bowls of rice a day with a half cup of vegetables, and occasionally a little meat. Father Clifford's ration was once reduced to one bowl of rice a day, because they thought he did not answer questions properly. Father Clifford did not take the personally conducted tour. It was offered him, but he replied, "They're your factories. You visit them."

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Rev. F. Stanley Carson and Miss Grace K. McClurg, both formerly of the Methodist